DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 363 911 EA 025 014

AUTHOR Bates, Richard
TITLE Educational Reform: Its Role in the Economic Destruction of Society.
PUB DATE Nov 92
NOTE 21p.; Keynote address at the Joint Annual Meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education and the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (Geelong, Victoria, Australia, November 22-26, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Critical Theory; *Economic Impact; Educational Change; Educational Economics; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *Free Enterprise System; *Privatization; School Choice; *School Restructuring; Social Control
IDENTIFIERS *Australia

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role played by educational reform (as advocated by economic rationalism) in the economic destruction of Australian society. It is argued that two mechanisms for containing economic difficulties are the plundering of the nation state and the application of new technologies of production. Strategies of educational reform, as advanced by economic rationalists, serve to privatize education (a mechanism of exclusion) and create structural controls through national curricular and evaluative standards. The reorienting of the educational system to secure appropriate skills for the world of work is based on specious grounds. The new managerialism to reduce professional autonomy reduces education to a handmaiden of the economy, appropriates public assets in the service of private interests, and subordinates the democratic interest of the people as a whole to the managerial interests of the few. One area of optimism is that actual implementation practices often modify official policy decisions. In contrast to the aims of economic-rationalist reform, a good school embodies a collegial, professional style of curricular and pedagogical development within a secure school culture supported by community values and resources. In conclusion, economic-rationalist educational reforms constitute, through their denial of the social, a denial of the self. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 363 911

Educational Reform: Its Role in the Economic Destruction of Society.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Bates

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

Richard Bates
Faculty of Education
Deakin University
Vic 3217

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EA 025 014

Keynote Address: Joint AARE/NZARE Annual Conference.
Deakin University, Geelong, November 22-26, 1992.

Those of us in the Western World, most particularly in the English speaking countries, are currently experiencing the economic destruction of society. That is, as the crisis of the international economy deepens, the nation states through which our societies have been created come under attack. The achievement of a civilised society towards which our nation states have largely been directed is being displaced by an overiding goal: that of perpetuating an unsustainable economic order for as long as possible. In the pursuit of this goal the social purposes of nation states are being traduced, their public assets stripped, their public institutions gutted and their struggle towards democracy betrayed. Education, as one of the key institutions through which individual and social aspirations are constructed is a prime target and agency in this process of 'reform'. Educational reform is a crucial mechanism in the economic destruction of society, or, if you prefer, in the subordination of the universal interests of society to the partial interests of the economy.

The Crisis of Capital and the Subordination of the Nation State.

International capital is currently facing four great crises simultaneously. Firstly, the crisis of third world government insolvency created through the corrupt practices of the sixties and seventies continues to jeopardise the financial institutions of the first world as it beggars the economies of the third. Secondly, in the first world the excessive speculation in real estate and company takeovers of the eighties has produced a series of insolvency crises and failures in western financial institutions that undermine confidence in the financial system as a whole. Thirdly, the end of the cold war has brought about a scaling down of the armaments economy which was previously one of the major engines of economic growth, particularly in the United States. Fourthly, the political necessity of reintegrating Europe has slowed the German economy to a standstill and with it the economies of all other European countries while the production capacity of the Asian Tiger economies has further depressed the possibility of recovery in Western economies..

The result is pretty obviously a precarious international financial and economic system which is subject to sudden disruptions of a very substantial kind, as the 1987 crisis made clear and which the current chronic balance of payments crises foreshadow.

While various mechanisms are invented to deal with this rather sustained crisis (such as emergency loans, rescheduling debt, trade agreements, state guarantees etc), two mechanisms in particular are fundamental to the strategy currently advocated as a longer term solution to continuing difficulties. These are firstly, the plundering of the nation state and secondly the application of new technologies of production. Each of these strategies demands significant reforms in education.

Plundering the State.

The most blatant forms of plundering the state are those in which mechanisms are devised for socialising costs and privatising benefits, as Galbraith so eloquently put it. Whilst this process is fundamental to the appeal of the welfare state to capital (in that the costs of health, education, social welfare, as well as physical infrastructure and some business establishment costs are underwritten by the state rather than business) other more blatant examples abound. Recent examples of this are the acceptance of the Victorian Government for the financial consequences of private sector irresponsibility through the public funding of the liabilities of such financial insitutions as Tricontinental, Pyramid and Estate Mortgage, a situation paralleled in South and Western Australia- and Australian equivalents of the US government guarantees for failed Savings and Loan Associations. Other forms of plunder are less direct.

For some hundred years or more in many Western countries the nation state has been regarded as having fundamental responsibilities for the security and protection of its citizens from external and internal threat and an increasing responsibility for the assurance of their quality of life through the development and regulation of public education, health and at least a rudimentary safety net of social security. In addition there has been an increasing recognition of the claims of marginalised groups, whether they be women, people with disability, the economically impoverished, or those suffering racial or geographical segregation. Taxation policies have facilitated the establishment of a significant physical and institutional infrastructure to serve these social objectives and expand democratic rights of participation to an increasing proportion of the population. State support of educational agencies has encouraged the development of significant professional expertise as a crucial element in the provision of such public services. Through such mechanisms the state has, in very substantial measure, better served an increasing proportion of its citizens.

Currently this social infrastructure, physical, institutional and professional, which has been constructed to serve the needs of the many, is under threat of appropriation so that it might serve the needs of the few. The threat takes two particular forms: privatisation and marketisation. Education is a particularly good example of the strategies involved in such reforms.

New Technologies of production.

Simultaneously with the attack on public institutions and public wealth there is an attack being mounted on the people themselves. It is being facilitated enormously by the development of particular technologies of production, firstly in manufacturing and secondly in knowledge management industries. Just as Therborn could say farewell to the working class in the nineteen seventies as such technology revolutionised the manufacturing sector, we can now say farewell to the middle class as information technology revolutionises communications and service industries and the management of production and distribution.

The effects of the ways in which these technologies are being deployed are clear. They both create and concentrate wealth while simultaneously depressing and marginalising larger and larger fractions of the population.

The Australian experience here is typical. While the earnings of the top one per cent of the workforce equalled those of the bottom eleven per cent a decade ago, they now equal the earnings of the bottom twenty one percent (Ellingson, 1992). Over the past decade and a half some 400,000 middle class jobs have dissappeared and the middle class share of income has dropped substantially, by three per cent in the final year of the last decade alone. Teachers have been a significant component of this class and their real incomes have dropped by over ten per cent in the last decade.

As the middle class is displaced it typically moves down the occupational hierachy in significant numbers thus displacing less highly educated labour and adding to the disposession of the working class. Collectively there are now roughly a million unemployed most of whom are, or were, middle and working class breadwinners. The working class itself is now fractioned into short and long-term unemployed. The underclass of the long

term unemployed includes many among the young, the disabled, Aboriginals, those on long term welfare for various reasons, women and a rural peasant class. Significantly it also includes 700,00 children living in poverty (Ellingson, 1992). Human Rights Commisioner Brian Burdekin suggests that such a situation reveals Australia as a barbaric society. [1] It is difficult to disagree.

There are, of course, other effects of the applications of technology. The massive increases in the scale of our appropriation of the planet through resource extraction, industrialisation and chemicalisation have resulted in major environmental crises many of which seem to be irreversible and some of which may be life threatening on a global scale.

Such problems are first and last social problems and must be responded to in social terms. It is our forms of social organisation, including our organisation of economic activity in ways which allow the unfettered exploitation of physical, human, and social resources for private gain, which necessitate reforms of our education system. The reforms required are, however, vastly different from those proposed by those who would subordinate society to the demands of the global economy. I shall return to this theme later in my paper. For the moment I wish to turn to a consideration of the current educational reforms being pursued by English speaking governments as the ideology, strategy and effects of these reforms are currently addressed by educational research.

Educational Reform: Privatising and Marketising the Social.

The ideology of current reforms is now quite clear. Despite earlier confusion over apparent similarities between the reform agenda of the new right and some of the aspects of progressive educational reform proposed in the sixties and seventies (such as increasing differentiation as a response to social diversity, increased autonomy and local participation in schooling, increased professionailsation of curriculum and assessment) we can be quite confident that the ideological manoeuvre involved (Grace, 1990) is now transparent. As Snook makes clear:

---

[1] As Simon Marginson (1992) reminds us, Jonathon Swift (1729) had an appropriately economic rationalist solution to this problem through his modest proposal to fatten such children for the tables of the reach, thus creating a new gourmet delight, improving the incomes of the poor and having the potential of contributing to the balance of payments problem.

> This whole model of school reform assumes that the way to improve education is to control it more rigidly and to hand it over to the market. It is not about the quality of teachers, it is not about professionalism, it is not about teachers and their knowledge and their dedication and their concern for children or their ethical standards. It is about control by market forces.
>
> (Snook, 1992:7)

Why, it might well be asked, is the transformation of education from a public good to a private market so important. The answer, again, is becoming clear. As the limits of current markets for goods are reached new markets must be found so that capital can continue to accumulate and concentrate. Privatising the social assets of the public sphere and transforming their supply of services into profit driven markets increases the possibility of further accumulation. Thus, health, transport, prisons, education and other public agencies, if they can be captured by the private sphere, can be made to serve the purposes of profit and capital accumulation.

However, on the surface, a blatant attempt to capture public resources for private profit might well be resisted by the public as a whole. Except for one major factor.

Within the context of the current disorganisation of the workforce (and consequently, the wider society) referred to above, various strategies emerge in terms of protecting or reducing various historical advantages. While the struggle for educational reform has largely been towards the universalising of access and benefits, the struggle to capture education for sectional benefit has always had to be resisted. When social conditions change, then the balance of this battle also changes. Understood within such a history of educational reform we can see that

> ...the implementation of market reforms in education is essentially a class strategy which has as one of its major effects the reproduction of relative social class (and ethnic) advantages and disadvantages.
>
> (Ball, 1992:2)

Where the battle for position is intensified through changed economic circumstances a middle class under threat might well see a marketised (and possibly even privatised) education system as being significantly to its advantage. Indeed, despite it being relatively early days in the move towards the education market,

the reality of such expectations is becoming clear. For instance Ball suggests that in the emerging education market in England:

> (a) the strategic processes of choice systematically disadvantage working class families and (b) the link between choices and resources (via per capita funding) disadvantages working class schools and communities (ramifying and interacting with other collective consumption inequalities). In other words, the operation and effects of an education market benefit certain class groups and fractions to the detriment and disadvantage of others.
>
> (Ball, 1992:19)

So the creation of educational markets based upon 'choice' might well be seen to provide a relative advantage to the middle class in its battle to maintain position and privilege against the logic of labour market restructuring: for the market, like class, is a mechanism of exclusion.

But markets, despite their promises, do not provide unfettered choice. The promise of relative advantage through choice which allows both the expenditure and the accumulation of cultural capital can only be delivered if the service itself can be depended upon to perform appropriately.

In other words, in order for educational markets to be legitimated in the eyes of consumers they must be structured so as to produce particular benefits.

<u>The Structuring and Control of Educational Markets.</u>

Simultaneously with the fragmentation of education systems into a series of competitive units (under the guise of greater local control and responsiveness) two major structural controls are being imposed so that market 'guarantees' can be provided. The first is curricular, the second evaluative.

The restructuring of curriculum on a national standardised basis is currently taking place in most English speaking countries. As a framework within which teachers may work there is nothing objectionable to this as such. However, typically the <u>form</u> of such curricular structures is being constructed to impose a matrix of topics, levels and competencies which is inflexible and completely contrary to what research says about the construction of effective pedagogical processes. It also moves directly counter to the

increasing differentiation of complex, multi-cultural societies. Moreover, the curriculum is frequently presented in terms of purely instrumental utility related to the 'world of work'.

In Australia the subordination of national curriculum development to the revivified Australian Education Council under Minister Dawlins and the articulation of a national agenda through the jointly owned Curriculum Corporation displays this characteristic quite clearly. Moreover, the Finn, Mayer, Carmichael Reports which are also directed towards the reconstruction of curriculum exclude all matters that are not instrumental, work-related competencies, declaring that such issues as 'cultural understanding' are either irrelevant or too difficult to encompass within their specific (narrow?) objectives.

Comparable situations exist in England and New Zealand.

Moreover, systematic audits of schools to ensure compliance with the specified curriculum are also proposed. The result is, as Hargreaves and Reynolds suggest, a system which ensures '... not choice and diversity, but the enforcement of traditional academic homogeneity through the state regulated market of parental choice' (1989:27). Colours are not allowed but you can have your choice of greys!

The basis of choice is theoretically at least, to be a public assessment of relative performance on state determined tasks between schools and other educational agencies. The performance is to be judged on strictly comparable criteria of the nationally prescribed curriculum tasks.

In the United Kingdom a policy of raw score publication of test results is supposed to allow parents to choose good schools and avoid bad schools. The effect, however is rather to ensure that certain oversubscribed schools can 'capture' the market by ensuring, not that their internal processes foster the greatest increases in student learning, but that their selection of their intake is sufficiently rigorous to ensure success by ensuring that only the most able enter their portals (see Ball, 1992:13). The effect of such policies is simply to hierachise schools and to exaggerate relative advantages and disadvantages rather than to improve performance of either poor schools or the system as a whole.

Educational and Labour Markets: Is there a Link?

One of the fundamental public justifications for the construction of educational markets is that the existing educational systems have failed to produce the right mix or standard of skills required by a dramatically changing labour force. Thus existing education systems are responsible for the unemployability of youth. The solution is to create an educational market which will in some mystical way, adjust itself to the requirements of the labour market. The invisible hand will look after us all.

In New Zealand the claim is made by the Porter Report and echoed by other New Right documents that "Participation and performance in such areas as mathematics and science is poor compared to other advanced nations' . As Ivan Snook points out, not a shred of evidence is presented to support this assertion. Indeed as Warwick Elley demonstrated by appeal to the best educational research available quite the opposite is true: "New Zealand's educational performance levels in the basic subjects are very high by international standards' (Elley, 1991:1). Lauder (1991), Peters (1992) and Snook have reinforced this assessment. Similar assertions are made in Australia despite similar evidence to the contrary (McGaw 1992).

But the promise is still made that by reorganising education, skills can be brought into line with what is required in the world of work and that this will increase performance, employment, the rewards of work and international competitiveness. In New Zealand Peters (1992) and Snook (1992) among others have shown the fallacy of this argument.

For, while we are constantly regaled with promises of the 'new economy' none of the documents that hails its advent does more than sketch vague generalisations about the shift from manufacturing to service industries and the presumed rise in skill levels that is required. As Snook points out

> All in all, the documents discussed fail to adequately define the 'new economy' or the kinds of workers it requires. They imply but never demonstrate that service industries will require higher levels of skill than the primary and manufacturing sectors did, or that non-manual jobs will need more knowledgable workers than many of the manual jobs which they will supercede.
>
> (Snook, 1992:7)

Moreover, all available research indicates that the highest of growth in employment internationally is in low wage/low skill areas rather than high skill/high tech areas (Watkins, 1992). This conclusion based on international data was supported by the Victorian Government's Department of Labour which in a 1990 report indicated that by the turn of the century there would be a substantial oversupply of highly skilled labour and an undersupply of clerks (25.1%) sales persons (25.3%) and labourers (22.6%) (see Bessant, 1992).

What this seems to mean is that the reorienting of the education system to secure appropriate skills for the world of work is proceeding on quite specious grounds. Firstly, no-one has yet demonstrated what particular skills are required by the new economy or in what mix. Moreover, education systems already seem to be, by any objective criteria, producing more people with high levels skills than the new economy can absorb. Moreover, what research there is seems to indicate that the high tech industry of the present, let alone the future, increases only marginally the demand for high tech labour, but serves to massively displace middle level skills in favour of low skill/low wage labour. Indeed, that is what it is designed to do.

Managerialsim and the new order.

What is noticable about the ways in which these transformations are being brought about is the replacement of processes of participatory (or in many cases even representative) democracy by the authority of managerialism. As Snook observes:

> The New Right is profoundly undemocratic. The Libertarian theory is opposed to the involvement of ordinary people in the affairs of government. They believe that those with money, those who have proven themselves in business, are really the people who should be making our decisions for us. I regard that as not only profoundly undemocratic, but as a very dangerous tendency for our society.
>
> (Snook, 1992:11)

Ironically, the New Right champions the imposition of unrepresentative management on social institutions as a defence against 'provider capture', and by doing so disenfranchises the professional expertise which sustains them. [2] The intent is clearly

---

[2] I have addressed this issue in two recent papers: 'The Emerging Culture of Educational Administration and what we can do about it' (1992a) and

to bring teachers (along with other professionals) to heel, to reduce their autonomy and subject them to processes of accountability which allow them to be managed by those whose yardstick is not professional knowledge or expertise but 'performance indicators'.

Perhaps the most extreme example of this is the about to be published New Zealand Government document 'Education for the 21st Century' which consists of nothing more than the briefest of all statements of current conditions, a series of lists of targets expressed in numerical or percentage terms and some one sentence statements of monitoring and evaluation procedures. The document is devoid of context and devoid of argument. It is as complete an example as one could get of the practices of the new managerialsim.

Another example of such managerialism is the development of competency standards for the professions - a movement which is well under way in Australia. Here again is an ideological maneouvre of the most transparent kind, for who could possibly be opposed to greater competence among professionals? The mechanisms through which such competence is to be promoted, however, display all the managerial subtlety of the attempts to impose performance indicators on schools and may well serve to depress rather than enhance professional performance (Bates, 1992c).

Again, the recent DEET Discussion paper on Teacher Education also displays a willingness to sacrifice professional interest and commitment to the managerial imperative of control (Bates, 1992d).

Ball, points to similar intentions in England.

> In the restructuring of teachers' pay and conditions, in specialist training for school management, in central control over curriculum and the posibility of comparative testing (of students, schools and teachers), the three basic elements of classical management theory are clearly in evidence. First, decision-making is formally lodged within the management team, seperating policy from execution. Second, systems of quality control, time and motion study, and monitoring are

---

'Leadership and School Culture' (1992b) as well as in 'Who Owns the Curriculum?' (1991)

> brought into play through the development of teacher appraisal schemes and the use of cohort testing. The development of graded assessment schemes also fits quite neatly into a system of performance comparison between teachers.... Third, efforts are made to link pay and promotion directly to performance.
>
> (Ball, 1990:154)

The logic of such managerialsim flies in the face of the overwhelming bulk of the best educational research which despite the assurances of the would be managers that we can have excellence and efficiency too (that is higher perfomrance with lower costs) shows that

> ...the main determinants of success are the social class of the children, their prior achievement at home and in their previous school and the income and education of their parents. For the rest they find that good schools are those in which principals are leaders not managers, and in which teachers form a true community of professionals who talk a lot among themselves about school related matters. Good schools, contrary to the doctrine, spend more on education, pay more to teachers, have lower teacher/pupil ratios and have more resources.
>
> (Snook, 1992:8-9)

Research points in the opposite direction to the imposition of managerialism. Moreover there is also ample historical evidence that the blind imposition of such managerialism produces both social tragedy and decline in the performance of educational systems (Callahan, 1962)

Is There any Hope ?

In the face of this series of crude ideological manoeuvres which press towards a new educational settlement which reduces both education and society to be handmaidens of the economy, appropriates public assests in the service of private interests and subordinates the democratic interest of the people as a whole to the managerial interests of the few, what can we hope for?

Firstly, while the proposed managerialist scheme is enacted in legislation, as with most centrally devised schemes and despite some quite coercive provisions, actual practice turns out to be modified in unexpected ways as settlements have to be reached with those who are expected to 'implement' decisions.

As Wallace et al (1992) show in the British case, the move towards Local Management of Schools which is the British euphemism for managerial capture, has resulted in some suprising alliances and modifications. Parent governors seem to have sided with teachers and pupils more frequently than not in debates over resources, curriculum and assessment once they have become familiar with the complexity and difficulty of teaching and learning under increasingly impoverished conditions.

In New Zealand as Codd et al (1992) report, proposed manageralist forms of assessment and accountability have been to a substantial degree, subverted and forms of assessment more appropriate to diagnostic, professional purposes are on the agenda.

Again in New Zealand moves towards the bulk funding of teachers salaries, seen by the government as crucial in the deregulation of schooling have been overwhelmingly rejected by the boards of governors who are to implement them: of 826 submissions in this regard, 825 want the Bill withdrawn (Austin, 1992).

There are also signs that governments are showing their true colours and the rhetoric of local 'ownership' is wearing very thin as central political control is clearly spelled out (See Codd and Gordon, 1991). Moreover, as Ball and Bowe (1992) point out with regard to the English experiment, there is a serious tension emerging between the rhetoric of consumer choice and the rhetoric of management control as the reality of practice begins to bite. The outcome is much less certain than the managers would have us believe.

In the Australian scene the complexities of state/federal relations and the contradictions created by an avowedly socialist government selling the farm to private interests create a series of difficulties which may yet galvanise an effective opposition within the Labour movement. Moreover, in Victoria the ruthlessness of the Kennett Government in its attack on the public sphere which appears to include the closure of up to 200 schools and the displacement of some 2000 teachers has consequences which are not solely confined to the teaching profession. The reduction in access to and quality of education in an era where education is proclaimed by the government itself as vitally important contains its own contradictions.

What should we be fighting for ?

We have enough research now to describe pretty clearly the conditions under which good schools operate. They are not the conditions promised by the reforms of the economic rationalists. Quite the converse. As the OECD Report Schools and Quality makes clear the world wide literature suggests the following characteristics:

1 Collaborative planning and decisionmaking among all staff.

2. Positive educational leadership from senior staff.

3. High staff stability

4. Staff feel secure and supported

5. Procedures are orderly

6. On going school based staff development.

7. Carefully planned curricula

8. High levels of parental support

9. A school wide system of values

10. Maximum use of learning time

11. Confidence that resources will continue to be available.

In short a collegial, professional style of curricular and pedagogical development within a secure school culture supported by its community in both values and resources. This is all but the converse of the managerialist market model proposed by the economic rationalists.

They are also. notably, social rather than economic criteria. That is, they display quite clearly the fundamental connection between schooling and social, rather than simply economic criteria. In this the findings on effective schools equate quite well with the results of Robert Lane's synthesis of over a thousand investigators' enquiries into the impact of market forces on peoples lives. Ted Wheelwright summarises Lane's conclusions like this:

> His central *concern is with the effects* of economic activity on human learning, personal development, and happiness, and he considers that the most important criteria for judging markets is the satisfaction that people get from their experience of markets, and not markets' efficiency in producing and distributing goods and services. Income, goods and services are only means to ends which are satisfaction, happiness and human development.
>
> (Wheelwright, 1992:47)

In making this judgement Lane's conclusions are similar to those of an Australian study which clearly rejected a solely economic model of society:

> ...the Australians in our study promote an alternative view of humankind - one of a caring, just, morally responsible, compassionate and ecologically aware species. The overwhelming endorsment of the goal of social justice and the emphasis on interpersonal goals such as caring for others indicate a shift towards what Schumacher (1975) labelled almost two decades ago 'people centred theories' of dealing with social organisation. People should matter in the future Australian society where all members are assured of equitable chances of developing their potentials and sharing equitably in what their society has to offer.
>
> (Campbell, 1992)

Moreover, there are indications that despite the interference of economic rationalism with its deregulation of markets and its treatment of the social as subordinate to the economic, there is still a strong commitment to more than simply the production of wealth in uncertain times. Indeed, as Adam Smith himself pointed out the market itself depends upon the existence of a community of sentiment which sustains the values and commitments upon which it depends. Or, as Gitlin put it more recently and more evocatively

> Now that Soviet style socialism is defunct, 'the Market' is the world's leading utopia... But a working market requires something that buccaneer capitalism cannot deliver - a shared commons where the market takes place. A healthy society requires, and produces, a spirit of civility- a generosity of feeling, a widespread commitment to the furtherance of the common conversation about the common

> good. To use an old fashioned term, civil society cultivates and requires civic virtue. The ideal of Main Street...is one in which neighbours watch out for one another. But today the ideals of Main Street are constantly eaten away by the pursuit of the main chance...When marketplace reasoning predominates everywhere, the war of all against all explodes the provisional truces. In everyday life social responsibility decomposes... In the culture, the dissolution of solidarity in the solvent of indiscriminate rage gives us the embattled, desperado masculinity of slash and grunt movies. (Gitlin, 1922)

Educational reform which adresses solely economic criteria within a society in which the social is subordinated to the economic through the reconstruction of public institutions in the service of the market is a significant contribution to the elimination of the social from the consciousness of individuals. And, as Rousseau reminded us 'take from the individual all that is society ...and you are left with blind sensation', a blind sensation that might be either the satisfaction of consumption or the rage of dipossession.

But, clearly the culture provided by the market is, because of its exclusion of the social, unable to satisfy the needs of individuals for any depth of meaning in their existence. 'I consume therefore I am' (with its concomitant 'I cannot consume, therefore I am not') is as inadequate a definition of the self as it is a mechanism for the construction of society (Bates, 1992).

There is, therefore, a deepseated sense in which the educational reforms currently in vogue in English speaking countries, located as they are in a panic reaction to conditions of economic crises currently facing Western capital, constitute not only an attack on society, but also an attack on our very selves. The aspirations of the people are clear and, beyond a certain threshold, overwhelmingly social and personal in nature, for the construction of the self is simultaneously the construction of society. The denial of the social is the denial of the self.

Educational reforms which further the economic destruction of society and deny the social responsibility of education will serve us and our children poorly indeed.

We need to fight not only for an education system that recognises its preeminently social role, but also for the reassertion of social objectives as the prime task of politics and the subordination of the economic to social imperatives in the wider sphere. Such a

task is quite in keeping with our forbears commitment to the establishment of social democracy in both Australia and New Zealand.

References

Austin, M. (1992) (1992) A Principal's Role: Today and Tomorrow . Paper to Bay of Plenty Principal, Conference, October.

Ball, Stephen (1990) Foucault and Education London, Routledge

Ball, Stephen (1992) Education Markets, Choice and Social Class: The Market as a class strategy in the UK and the US. Unpublished paper: Centre for Educational Studies, King's College, London.

Bates, Richard (1991) Who Owns the Curriculum? pp in P. Capper (ed) Pathways to the New Century Wellington, N.Z. New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association.

Bates, Richard (1992) Barely Competent: against deskilling of the professions via the cult of competence. Seminar on Competency and Professional Education. Faculty of Education, University of Canberra, September.

Bates, Richard (1992) Leadership and School Culture. Keynote Address: II Congreso Interuniversitario de Organizacion Escolar, Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla, Spain, December.Bates, Richar (1992) Ther Emerging Culture of Educational Administration and what We Can Do About It.

Keynote address, National Conference of the Australian Council for Educational Administration. Darwin, July.

Bessant, R. (1992) Clever Country or Clever Gimmick. Australian Administrator 13 (5)

Callahan, R. (1992) Education and the Cult of Efficiency Chicago, Chicago University Press

Campbell, W.J. (1992) (ed) Towards an Educational Curriculum for 2000 and Beyond Nathan, Queensland. World Educational Fellowship

Codd. J. & Gordon, L. (1991) School Charters: The contractualist state and education policy. New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies 26 (1) 21-34

Codd, J., McAlpine, D., & Poskett, J (1992) The Reform of Student Assessment in New Zealand: Whose Agenda? What Effects?

Paper presented to NZARE/AARE Joint Conference. Deakin University. November

Department of Employment, Education and Training (1992) Discussion Paper on Teacher Education Canberra

Elley, Warwick (1991) How well do New Zealand Studewnts Achieve by International Standards? University of Canterbury, Christchurch

Ellingson, Peter (1992) 'The Recession not everyone had to have' The Age Saturday Nov. 14.

Gitlin, Todd (1991) Unicivil Society Image April 19.

Grace, Gerald (1990) The New Zealand Treasury and the Commodification of Education. pp 27-39 in S. Middleton, J. Codd, A. Jones, (eds) New Zealand Educational Policy Today Wellington: Allen & Unwin

Hargreaves, A. & Reynolds, D (1989) Educational Policies: Controversies and Critiques London: Falmer Press

Lauder, Hugh (1991) Tomorrow's Education: Tomorrow's Economy Report Commissioned by the Education Sector Standing Committee of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions. Wellington

Marginson, Simon (1992) Education as a Branch of Economics: The Universal Claims of Economic Rationalisation pp. 1-14 in Rationalising Education Melbourne Studies in Education 1992

Peters, Michael (1992) A Critique of the Porter Report. pp4-14 in Delta 46 Massey University. N.Z.

Snook, Ivan (1992) A Skilled Workforce and the School Curriculum Paper presented to the Wellington South Principal's Association. Parina, July.

Snook, Ivan (1992) Reform in Education: A Better Way. Keynote address, Western Bay of Plenty Principal's Association. Tarranga August

Wallace, G. (ed) Local Management of Schools: Research and Experience Clevedon, Multilingual Matters.

Watkins, Peter ( )

Wheelwright, Ted (1992) 'The Ends of Economics' pp 45-47 in Arena Magazine No. 1. November